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FM AMEMBASSY AMMAN
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INFO AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
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AMEMBASSY RABAT
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AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY TUNIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 AMMAN 002094

STATE FOR NEA, S/CT
LONDON FOR TUELLER, PARIS FOR ALLEGRONE

E.O. 12958: DECL: 3/6/01
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SUBJECT: WHAT HAMAS IS -- AND ISN'T -- IN JORDAN

REF: A) AMMAN 1993; B) 95 AMMAN 4285 (NOTAL)

11. (U) CLASSIFIED BY CHARGE ROBERT BEECROFT; REASON 1.5 (D).

12. (C) THERE IS NO/NO EVIDENCE TO LINK EITHER HAMAS SPOKESPERSONS IBRAHIM GHAWSHAH OR MUHAMMAD NAZZAL TO OPERATIONS CONDUCTED IN ISRAEL AND THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES BY HAMAS' MILITARY WING. EMBASSY LIKEWISE HAS NO EVIDENCE TO VALIDATE CONTENTIONS THAT THERE IS A CLANDESTINE LEADERSHIP GROUP OPERATING IN JORDAN LINKED TO TERRORIST ACTIVITIES IN JERUSALEM, THE TERRITORIES OR ISRAEL. THERE REMAINS NO DECLARED HAMAS PRESENCE IN JORDAN BEYOND THE INFORMATION OFFICE. WHILE HAMAS POLITICAL FIGURES SUCH AS MUSA ABU MARZUQ VISITED JORDAN IN THE PAST, USUALLY TO SEE FAMILY MEMBERS RESIDENT HERE, SUCH VISITS WERE STRICTLY CONTROLLED BY JORDANIAN INTELLIGENCE. THERE IS SOME ANECDOTAL INFORMATION THAT HAMAS COURIERS CARRY CASH BETWEEN JORDAN AND THE WEST BANK AND GAZA. JORDANIAN AUTHORITIES HAVE SEVERAL TIMES NOTED THE DIFFICULTY OF MONITORING THE PASSAGE OF SUCH FUNDS AND/OR IDENTIFYING BANK ACCOUNTS USED BY HAMAS.

13. (U) JORDANIAN OFFICIALS ARE INCENSED OVER RECENT ALLEGATIONS BY PA OFFICIAL NABIL SHA'TH LINKING JORDAN TO THE RECENT SPATE OF HAMAS BOMBINGS IN TEL AVIV AND JERUSALEM. KING HUSSEIN, CROWN PRINCE HASSAN AND PRIME MINISTER ABD AL-KARIM AL-KABARITI HAVE ALL ISSUED STRONG STATEMENTS CONDEMNING THE BOMBING. FURTHER, ON MARCH 4 THE GOJ DISPATCHED MINISTER OF INTERIOR AWAD KHLAYFAT AND MINISTER OF WATER SAMIR QA'WAR TO GAZA WITH A MESSAGE FROM THE KING TO PALESTINE AUTHORITY (PA) LEADER ARAFAT REPORTEDLY UNDERSCORING JORDANIAN SUPPORT FOR THE PA AND THE NEED FOR GREATER JORDANIAN-PALESTINIAN COORDINATION TO COUNTER THE "WAVE OF MILITANT VIOLENCE" THREATENING THE PEACE PROCESS.

14. (C) THE GOJ IS CLEARLY ANXIOUS TO AVOID ANOTHER WAR OF WORDS WITH THE PALESTINIANS OVER THIS SUBJECT. LAST YEAR, THEN-FOREIGN MINISTER KABARITI REPEATEDLY DENIED ALLEGATIONS OF COLLUSION WITH HAMAS OR TOLERATION OF ACTIVITIES BEYOND THOSE OF ITS INFORMATION OFFICE (AND THEN ONLY WITHIN EXTREMELY STRICT LIMITS). AFTER A DRAMATIC REMINDER TO SPOKESMAN IBRAHIM GHAWSHAH LAST APRIL OF WHAT THE GOJ WOULD ALLOW, THE GOJ IN MAY DEPORTED HAMAS OFFICIAL IMAD AL-ALAMI, AT THE TIME HEAD OF THE HAMAS OFFICE IN TEHRAN AND CURRENTLY HEAD OF HAMAS' OFFICE IN DAMASCUS, IN ADDITION TO POLITICAL OFFICE DIRECTOR ABU MARZUQ (NOW IN THE U.S. FACING EXTRADITION TO ISRAEL).

15. (C) AS EMBASSY EARLIER REPORTED (REF B) THE GOJ, WARY OF CREATING A CAUSE CELEBRE FOR THE JORDANIAN OPPOSITION AND CONCERNED WHETHER THE PROSECUTION OF JORDANIAN CITIZENS WOULD STAND UP IN COURT, OPTED TO KEEP THE INFORMATION OFFICE AND ITS PERSONNEL UNDER CLOSE SURVEILLANCE. APART FROM PROVOCATIVE SOUND-BITES, WHICH ARE NOT NEARLY AS INFLAMMATORY AS THEY WERE BEFORE APRIL 1995, BOTH GHAWSHAH AND NAZZAL HAVE MAINTAINED LOW PROFILES. INDEED, MFA SECRETARY GENERAL IBRAHIM NAGHAWI GENERALLY DOWNPLAYED THE IMPORTANCE OF THE HAMAS OFFICE IN JORDAN IN A CONVERSATION WITH CHARGE ON MARCH 6, THOUGH HE INDICATED

THAT JORDANIAN AUTHORITIES CONTINUE TO WATCH BOTH MEN. IN A MARCH 5 MEETING WITH THE CHARGE, ISRAELI DCM JACOB ROSEN AFFIRMED THAT ISRAEL FEELS SECURE IN THE FACT THAT JORDAN HAS HAMAS "FULLY COVERED."

16. (C) IN THE WAKE OF THE PA'S MOST RECENT ALLEGATIONS OF JORDANIAN COMPLICITY IN HAMAS MILITARY WING OPERATIONS, MANY OBSERVERS ANTICIPATE A CRACKDOWN BY THE GOJ, POSSIBLY IN RESPONSE TO U.S. OF ISRAELI PRESSURE. AN INFORMED EMBASSY SOURCE TOLD EMBOFF THAT THE CRACKDOWN COULD INCLUDE THE POSSIBLE "DEPORTATION" OF PERSONS SUSPECTED OF MAINTAINING LINKS WITH HAMAS OPERATIVES IN THE TERRITORIES. GOJ OFFICIALS HAVE, HOWEVER, PUBLICLY DISCLAIMED ANY "OPERATIONAL" CONNECTIONS BETWEEN HAMAS SYMPATHIZERS IN JORDAN AND MILITANTS ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE JORDAN RIVER. INTERIOR MINISTER KHLAYFAT TOLD THE ARABIC-LANGUAGE DAILY "AL'RA'I" THAT HAMAS MEMBERS IN JORDAN "ARE JORDANIANS WHO HAVE NO RELATION WITH TERRORISM OR WHATEVER IS HAPPENING IN ISRAEL OR THE PALESTINIAN SELF-RULE AREAS." HE CHARACTERIZED "THE PEOPLE WHO MAN THE HAMAS OFFICE IN AMMAN" AS "JORDANIAN CITIZENS WHO ACT IN A PEACEFUL MANNER SUBJECT TO JORDANIAN LAWS." SIGNIFICANTLY, THE MINISTER ADDED THAT THE GOJ COULD NOT "DEPORT JORDANIAN CITIZENS -- THAT'S AGAINST THE LAW."

17. (C) JORDANIAN AUTHORITIES' SENSITIVITY ABOUT BEING PORTRAYED AS OTHER THAN COMMITTED TO THE FIGHT AGAINST TERRORISM MAY PROMPT THE GOJ TO HEIGHTEN ITS SURVEILLANCE OF HAMAS' OFFICE AND PERSONNEL IN JORDAN AND TAKE WHATEVER ACTION IS DEEMED BOTH APPROPRIATE AND PRUDENT. AS IT HAS SHOWN IN THE PAST, THE GOJ WILL, IF NECESSARY, DISREGARD OBJECTIONS THAT MIGHT BE RAISED BY THE OPPOSITION. CROWN PRINCE HASSAN, IN ANNOUNCING A HEIGHTENED STATE OF ALERT IN JORDAN MARCH 5, INDICATED THAT JORDAN WOULD DO WHATEVER IS NECESSARY TO PRESERVE PUBLIC SECURITY WITHIN ITS BORDERS.

BEECROFT